

An Essay on  
Water  
As an Adjuvant in Medicine

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Respectfully Submitted  
to the  
Faculty of the Homoeopathic  
Medical College  
of  
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For the  
Degree of Doctor of Medicine  
By  
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In writing upon a subject so universal as Water one can bring into action many experiments generally, but an essay on Water as to its uses in Medicine the subject is somewhat narrowed; but still, for one who is accustomed to writing, and has words and thoughts innumerable, at command, and especially one well read in Medicine, it would not be a very difficult task.

But as I do not claim to be too well read in the science, it cannot be expected that I should write as profoundly on the subject as an older and more experienced person.

What I propose to do however, is to record experiments made on



myself, with different forms and kinds of bath, and I shall also bring to my aid such references and confirmations as well as contradictions<sup>and</sup>.

I shall bring forward cases from my own experience and the experience of others.

I hope I may be able to show the manner and circumstance wherein Water may be used in accordance with the law Similia,

1<sup>st</sup>. Then, as to the article

The physical Properties of Water are well known, It is transparent, colorless, inodorous, and tasteless; slightly compressible by a very strong pressure: elastic; converted into vapor by heat: boils at  $212^{\circ} F$ ; congeals at  $32^{\circ} F$



It is the standard of weight, with which all solid and liquid bodies are compared; its specific gravity is therefore 1.

Water has the power of absorbing a great number of gaseous bodies.

It always contains air. It is one of the most powerful solvents in nature. It enters into combination with various bodies.

The affinity of water for some substances is so strong that it cannot be entirely separated from them without at the same time decomposing the substance.

It enters into the composition of almost every substance. In animal and vegetable bodies it gives the necessary



fluidity of the blood of the former and the sap of the latter, without which neither could flow and be distributed throughout and nourish the different bodies.

The blood contains  $\frac{4}{5}$ <sup>ths</sup> of its weight in water. As a proof of the large proportion of water entering into the composition of the human body I may mention a fact stated by Blumenbach viz: that a perfectly dry mummy of an adult Guanche (one of the original inhabitants of Teneriffe) with all the muscles and viscera or internal organs entire, did not exceed seven and a half pounds in weight.

Bone itself and cartilage contain still greater proportion of water than blood, as a necessary constituent part



An illustration of the great proportion of water entering into the form and weight of the human body, is seen in the sunken shrivelled, diminished form of a stout man who has died after a few hours illness with Asiatic Cholera, there having been copious evacuations of water.

Water was looked upon formerly as one of the elements, of which it was thought there were four, Earth, Air, Fire, and Water,

Modern Chemistry however has demonstrated the fact that each of them are compound not simple elements, as for instance water is  $H_2O$ . —



2<sup>d</sup>. Its history in connection with the healing art &c —

We find recorded in Genesis 1<sup>st</sup> 2 Vers.

"And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

We find the water was created before the earth had form, and we can see the wisdom of the Almighty in forming the waters, and as a matter of course it was not made without purpose, and among other great uses it is claimed and claims its place as a medicinal agent, or at least as a valuable adjuvant.

It has been used in all ages as a common household article, and is



indispensable to health.

The uses of water are various (viz). Bathing, household purposes, as an adjuvant to Medicine and in the olden time was used by the Greeks & Romans in their religious ordinances &c. We have in Ancient history accounts of the baths, and it appears that great attention was paid to them. Bathing may, with propriety be regarded as a practice both congenial to our feelings of bodily comfort as well as conducive to vigorous health. As to its antiquity we cannot doubt, as it is resorted to in every stage of society, from the wandering savage, to the inhabitants of large and refined cities. In the best description of ancient manners



we meet with accounts of bathing in rivers. Domestic baths are also of remote antiquity, As the poet tells of Andromache preparing warm baths for Hector on his return from battle; and of Penelope calling in their aid to mitigate her melancholy at the prolonged absence of her husband. Minerva is figured to have imparted renewed vigor to the wearied limbs of Hercules at the warm springs of Thermopylae.

Homer gives frequent accounts describing the custom of females attending the male guests and assisting them in their ablutions.

We could give accounts from Sacred history of the importance attached to bathing as a means of cure of loathsome disease, as can be illustrated by the order



of Elisha to Naaman the leper to wash seven times in the river Jordan, and in John, where is the account of our Saviour commanding the blind man to wash in the pool of Siloam.

The pool of Bethesda was also resorted to by the sick and infirm but as to the medicinal qualities of the water we know nothing, And if they had not had faith a cure would not have been wrought.

As typical of moral purity, bathing by frequent ablutions, and immersions, was made to form part of the religious rites of the inhabitants of Central Asia and the East.

The Greeks were doubtless familiar with bathing, but were indebted to the Egyptians for giving system to bathing as



part of the Medical Art. Baths were sometimes called sacred by the Ancients

Bathing was regarded as a luxury as well as an observance of hygiene in Ancient Egypt, as seems to be proved by the circumstances of its being prohibited during times of general mourning. Boerhaave, who was a distinguished Practitioner, teacher, writer utters several sentences in praise of the dietetic value of water, among them we read the following, —

1<sup>st</sup> That pure and light waters are agreeable to the different natures and constitutions of all men.

2<sup>d</sup> That no remedy can more effectually secure health and prevent disease than pure water, That drinking of water



is serviceable in every complexion. Hoffmann calls it an "universal remedy" and "we assert" he says, "That warm is a remedy suited to all persons at all times; that there is no better preservative from distempers; that it is assuredly serviceable in Acute and Chronic diseases; and lastly, that its use answers to all indication, both of preservation and cure. —

Hippocrates, gives some precise indications to those who are suffering from disease —

"To persons whose bellies are hard and easily burnt up; by which we may understand the bilious temperament and costive habit, the sweetest and lightest, and the most



limped will be proper, but those whose bellies are soft, loose, and pituitous, lymphatic temperament, with tendency to looseness of the bowels, "should choose the hardest water &c -

Much more might doubtless be written under this head, but the above is sufficient for this paper -

### 3<sup>d</sup>. Its Physiological effects -

For the sake of clearness we shall divide it into three parts or agents -

- A - The cold bath, from freezing to  $60^{\circ}$
- B - The tepid bath from  $60^{\circ}$  to  $90^{\circ}$
- C - The hot bath from  $100^{\circ}$  upward

#### A - Effects of cold bath -

Chill, shivering, pale shrunken skin, collapse in the cutaneous and



superficial vessels; Slowness of circulation, Generall depression of all functional action connected with the skin, and excretory system.

Sense of suffocation and constriction in the epigastrium, Corrugated skin, labored breathing; difficult speech, loss of voice; depression of circulation; blueness of the skin; pain and cramps in muscles; numbness; Hippocratic countenance; Sunken eyes &c; Determination of blood to internal organs—

Uses (Old School) Galen, not in cold thin persons &c, Hippocrates, Inflammations, Hemorrhages, convulsive affections, with vascular excitement, &c &c. —

Hydropathic Uses; The Hydropathist



use cold water in pretty much the same diseases as are mentioned under old school, i.e. Fevers, Inflammations, hemorrhages &c.

Homoeopathic uses—

1<sup>st</sup> General chilliness; Chills; Colds; Chills preceding an attack of fever &c.

2<sup>d</sup> Habitual coldness; slowness or depression of circulation; stiffened joints; Paralysis (sentient or insentient)

3<sup>d</sup> Suppressed perspiration from cold

Coldness of surface—

4<sup>th</sup> Suppression of excretions;

Menstrual flow (retention or compression)

Urine

" " "

Feces — Injection; Anus bath

5<sup>th</sup> Torpidity of the functions of various

" organs —



Head - tendency of blood, sitz or foot bath

Chest

sitz "

Surge

" "

Head - and toothache foot bath

6<sup>th</sup> Mechanical injuries (200 years ago)

Boilise & cold water immediately  
after the injury

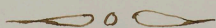
7<sup>th</sup> Frost bite -

8<sup>th</sup> Cholera (hot drinks cold application)

9<sup>th</sup> Intermittent fever (during the chill  
a shower bath very cold)

10<sup>th</sup> Disease of the skin

11<sup>th</sup> Impotency (cold sitz)



B - Effects of hot, warm or tepid bath  
from 60° and upwards, -

Increase in frequency and force  
of the circulation or pulse.



Redness and heat of the skin or surface, fullness of superficial vessels; respiration hurried; Mind obtuse and inattentive, Vertigo, excessive perspiration; Confusion of thoughts; dimness of sight; pain in head; Urging to urinate -

" Dr Loesette in his experiment remarks 'My sensations were precisely such as they are in a violent case of fever.'

Caution, Persons, Sanguineous, plethoric, full large head, should use the hot or warm bath with great caution.

Uses (Old school) -

Persons of cold still bodies; To quiet nerves; Convulsions; hysterical affections; Colic; Insanity; Biliary Colic; Cholera Morbus; Cholera Infantum; Croup; Influenza; Bronchitis; Asthma, Infla-



- mation of liver &c &c -

Intermittent fever during the chill,-  
Congestive fever; Cholera cramps;-

Affections of the skin &c -

Caution, Debilitated persons should  
avoid warm baths, except some febrile  
excitement remain.

Hydropathic Uses -

About the same as mentioned under  
old school, as they go pretty much by  
Contraries -

Homœopathic Uses -

1<sup>st</sup> Synochal fever: any fever character-  
ised by great heat of surface, rapid pulse &c.

2<sup>d</sup> Great vascular excitement &c.

3<sup>d</sup> Apoplexy; dizziness, headache,  
heat in head -

4<sup>th</sup> Delirium, Insanity (with febrile symptoms)



5<sup>th</sup> Intermittent fever (hot stage)

6<sup>th</sup> Inflammatory affections—

Burns; Injuries (Inflammatory stage)

Whitlow or Felon; Inflamed swellings,

Inflammatory Rheumatism

Inflammation of eyes, and of ear—

Eruptive fever, Measels, Scarlatina &c)

General Rules—

In affections with excited action,  
vascular or nervous, use always a bath  
higher than the temperature of the body.

Contra

In depressed vascular or nervous  
action, use a bath lower than the tem-  
perature of the body immersed in it—

I have given the three degrees of  
bath and the three different schools put  
them to as a curative agent—



"The first and sole duty of the physician is, to restore health to the sick, This is the true art of healing". The perfection of a cure consists in restoring health in a prompt, mild, and permanent manner; in removing and annihilating disease by the shortest, safest, and most certain means, upon principles that are at once plain and intelligible", (Organon)

If we know not the Character of drugs we cannot apply them rationally to the cure of disease, and if we wish "to restore health to the sick, in a prompt mild, and permanent manner" we must understand the remedies we would use, and we are taught by no less an example than Hahnemann's himself, to prove the drugs on our own persons: This has been



done until we have volumes of Materia Medica; but Water, has not been proved. Why should we not have a proving of it? It is an invaluable agent, a system of cure has been established, which has for its only remedy (what ever may be the case) Water.

More attention should be paid to this article by physicians, experiments should be made, I shall now give what few experiments I have made with the rules, by which I was guided -

The following are the rules I followed in my experiments -

- 1<sup>st</sup> Note the temperature of the room -
- 2<sup>d</sup> The number of pulsations per minute
- 3<sup>d</sup> The number of respirations per minute
- 4<sup>th</sup> The temperature @ in mouth; &



a in axilla; c in popliteal space; d  
at plantar surface of foot —

Immerse the entire body except  
the face in water —

1<sup>st</sup> Note the temperature of the water

2<sup>d</sup> At the end of two minutes note

a the pulse; b the respirations

c the temperature of mouth —

3<sup>d</sup> At the end of five minutes, leave  
the water, and note the points a; b;

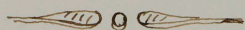
c and d, in section first, together  
with the sensations and so forth, exper-  
ienced during the bath —

4<sup>th</sup> After being out of the water five  
or ten minutes make same observa-  
-tions again — 3<sup>d</sup> —

During the day or two succeeding  
note symptoms both subjective and



objective, as in the proving of any other substance.



For a considerable time I have experienced, a dull heavy sensation in forehead, feels as if I could pull an envelope from off my brain. Sometimes had quite severe headache. The pain in forehead sometimes shoots back and at times is quite sharp at vertex.

For a few days have had a burning down pressing sensation at anus. Constipation at times, at present feel much relieved.

Had hemorrhoids two years ago.

Health generally good. Had an ulcer on middle third right leg in the Spring of 1837 healed during the summer, but left a copper colored spot about the



size of a silver dollar, I feel at times a very sharp pain dart thro' the place.

Occasionally pimples appear on my face and forehead, and have had them for a long time on my shoulders, also some on legs.

May 12/57. Have been very unwell, feeling of enlargement in Hypochondrium, dull pain; a sharp shooting pain up to shoulders, . Severe frontal headache &c. In evening was much better, feeling of soreness in Hypogastrium

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The first experiment I made, would be classed under the head of cold bath

Temperature of room  $82^{\circ}$  Fah: and of the water  $63^{\circ}$  Fah: —

I remained in the bath about two minutes



immediately on immersion, my breathing became hurried and quite loud & labored, as if a tight bandage were around my chest. A chilliness crept over me from my feet to the top of my head.

I had suffered for a day or two with a frontal headache, which had been relieved by Bella<sup>3</sup>. and while in the bath it returned very severely, my head felt heavy and full. The water created the sensation of coldness. I had intended remaining in the bath for the period of five minutes, and I was under the impression that I had done so (I had only been in two min.)

Upon quitting the bath, my head felt very heavy. I could scarcely control myself, I staggered so, that I should have fallen to the floor, if I had not sat down.



on a chair which was near; diminished temperature and paleness of the skin, effacement of the superficial veins, stoppage of the functions in part or wholly dependent on the capillary system.

About an hour and a half after the bath a feeling of weakness in both knees, finger nails purple, Pulse 85, Vertigo—

A succession of chills from coccyx up back, After the bath a pleasant glow over body—

Pulse, before entering the bath was beating at the rate of 64 a minute and full, after I had gotten out of the bath it had increased nine beats a minute making 73 a minute—

Respiration, before entering was 16 in minute and upon quitting the bath it had increased



four to minute, marking twenty respirations a minute, being quite hurried.

C Temperature of mouth before immersion  $92^{\circ}$  Fah: after leaving the bath  $90^{\circ}$ , a decrease of two degrees.— F, Temperature of axilla before immersion,  $95^{\circ}$  Fah; after leaving the bath  $90^{\circ}$  Fah, a decrease of  $5^{\circ}$ —

C Temperature of popliteal space before immersion  $95^{\circ}$  after leaving the bath  $90^{\circ}$ , a decrease of  $5^{\circ}$ —

d, Temperature of plantar surface of foot before immersion  $80^{\circ}$  Fah after leaving the bath  $83^{\circ}$ , an increase of  $3^{\circ}$ —

The second trial was but a short one, as I had not time to go into it as thoroughly, as I should have wished.

Temperature of room  $82^{\circ}$  Fah—Water  $70^{\circ}$  Fah  
Number of pulsations at wrist a minute 76.



after getting out of bath 61, two minutes  
after 66, an hour and a half after 85,  
and full

Number of respirations a minute 20, during  
the bath 23, after bath a few minutes 22,

Temperature of axilla before the bath  
 $93^{\circ}$  Fah after  $90\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  —

Temperature of mouth before the bath  
 $91^{\circ}$  after  $90^{\circ}$  —

Temperature popliteal space before bath  
 $91^{\circ}$ , after bath  $90^{\circ}$  —

Temperature plantar surface of foot  
before bath  $91^{\circ}$ , after bath  $89^{\circ}$  —

Chills all over my body; oppression at  
the chest; continual and quite violent  
shivering; Oppression in forehead,  
Pulse 74 and small; Veins collapsed;  
Skin pale.



From the symptoms presented it will be seen that Water might be made a much more useful article to the physician than it is —

Physicians cannot be too careful in prescribing cold baths, I know of a case, and I have no doubt that they can be multiplied, A young lady about 18 years of age at the time, of a very nervous temperament, who was much prostrated, delirious and dangerously ill from the effects of a cold bath prescribed by a Homoeopathic physician, Instead of the cold bath above prescribed, she should have been directed to take a sponge bath, every morning in moderately cool water, until, her nervous system would become accustomed



to cold water. In intermittent fever, water as an auxiliary to Homoeopathic practice is generally acknowledged to be very useful. In such cases the shower bath is used, Dr. Howe of Miss. reports cases, he says, the cold shower bath should only be used, at the commencement of a chill, and only in those patients, who have sufficient vitality in their system for a ready reaction, after its application, the patient must be well rubbed after the bath, his pulse must be carefully watched, and should it be found running a dose of *Tric. Camph.* should be administered.—

But I must close this Essay, hoping that someone will do the justice to the subject which I have failed

—Gives—